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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 002708

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/08/2007
TAGS: [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S BILATERAL MEETING WITH CANADIAN
DEPUTY MINISTER LEONARD EDWARDS

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Classified By CDA Paul Jones, reasons 1.4 c, d.

[¶1.](#) (C) SUMMARY: Canadian Deputy Minister Leonard Edwards reiterated Canada's interest in maintaining the fluidity of the U.S. Q Canada border, during an August 1 bilateral meeting with the Deputy Secretary at ASEAN Regional Forum meetings in Manila.. In particular, Canada wants to use travel documents other than passports and questioned the recent imposition of APHIS fees. Edwards also expressed Canada's dislike of the United States' new Northern Command structure. Edwards reported on the status and future of Canada's involvement in Afghanistan and commented on the Canadian Prime Minister's interest in the Americas. Canada has begun FTA negotiations with Colombia and Haiti is a Canadian foreign policy priority, representing Canada's largest aid recipient. END SUMMARY.

WESTERN HEMISPHERE TRAVEL INITIATIVE

[¶2.](#) (U) Edwards welcomed the good progress and communication on the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. He said the recent announcement that passports will not be required immediately at land borders is good news. However, Edwards continued to press for a commitment to expand the use of other documents, especially enhanced drivers licenses, in addition to passports. Edwards noted that he runs the Canadian passport office and they, like us, have struggled to meet the additional passport demand. He hopes to achieve normal service levels by August. Presently, Canadian citizens living in the U.S. have the longest wait. For those who can get to a passport office, the turnaround is 10 days. If applicants have to use mail service, it takes 12 to 13 weeks. Edwards noted that Canada ceased delivering passports to consulates as a savings measure, not anticipating the current demand.

[¶3.](#) (U) Edwards reported that the "thickening of the border" continues to be an issue and that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) fee that was recently imposed is also a concern. He noted that the Canadian government understands the security versus risk equation. They believe the U.S. approach is one that seeks no risk at considerable cost. In response, the Deputy Secretary said that the United States is doing what it can to preserve the fluidity of the border.

U.S.-CANADA DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP

[¶4.](#) (C) Edwards reported that the Canadian government was very happy with the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) but does not like the new Northern Command structure, which is less point-to-point and offers limited face-to-face contact. Canadians do not feel they participate in the same way they did

under NORAD, Edwards continued. They would like to work on a new joint statement for the anniversary of NORAD next year and Edwards reported that they have begun discussions with State Department counterparts about coordinating such an activity.

AFGHANISTAN

15. (C) Edwards noted that achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan is currently Canada's number one foreign policy objective. Canada is in the process of adjusting its Afghanistan programs. He reported that Canada is upgrading its presence in Kabul and Kandahar through more robust aid programs, including support for the police to undertake peace and security activities. Currently, there is no mandate for Canadian involvement beyond February 2009. While the Canadians have experienced success in Kandahar, they have seen the enemy transition from conventional operations to guerilla tactics, especially suicide bombings. Canadian casualties now result from such devices, not from combat. The Deputy Secretary noted that the U.S. sees this as a new class of tactics and that he feels we have not come very far in combating this threat.

16. (C) The Deputy Secretary raised the issue of Pakistan's border security, asserting that resolving Afghanistan's problems requires dealing with Pakistan. The Deputy Secretary pointed out that as the Taliban has moved into the Northwest Territories, the Pakistanis have begun to understand the dangers of offering the Taliban sanctuary. However, the Deputy Secretary questioned whether the Pakistani government has the strength to address the issue. The Deputy Secretary also noted that the U.S. is providing considerable aid to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in the hope that it will support U.S. objectives in Afghanistan. Edwards pointed out that Canada helped to bring the Pakistani and Afghani players together at the G-8 meetings. He indicated that the Canadian government would like to sponsor a border security meeting at the civilian level. The government is

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also interested in holding a workshop in Dubai for Pakistani and Afghani border security officials. The Deputy Secretary indicated that the United States would view any such efforts as helpful.

CANADA'S INTEREST IN THE AMERICAS

17. (C) The Canadian Prime Minister recently returned from a successful trip throughout the Americas that has made him more enthusiastic about his Hemispheric Initiative. During the trip, the Prime Minister started free trade talks with Colombia, although he then had to push back against domestic criticism. The Deputy Secretary indicated that, likewise, the U.S.'s biggest priority is to get four agreements ratified: Peru, Colombia, Panama, and South Korea. Colombia has proven troublesome, and the U.S. government has also faced criticism for paramilitary activities there. The Deputy Secretary indicated he believes that if a few countries in the region were to go the right way, it would make a large difference. Edwards offered that the Canadian government has maintained a good relationship with Chavez.

18. (C) The Deputy Secretary commented on his positive meetings with Canada's former Ambassador to Cuba. Edwards noted that he went to Cuba a month ago and met with the Commerce Ministry and the Foreign Minister. With the latter Edwards talked about human rights for over an hour. Edwards said he believes that Cuba is starting to think about transition. The Cuban Foreign Minister would not agree to talk with the Canadian government about human rights a month ago. Edwards also highlighted that the Canadian government is supporting a group of economists in Cuba, and those economists are reporting enthusiastically about the fact that they are being consulted about how to reform the Cuban economy. The Deputy Secretary told Edwards the U.S. does not want to give a free pass for Cuba to transition from one Castro to another.

He sees this as an opportunity to give freedom a chance. He also indicated that he would like to keep in close touch with the Canadians on this issue.

19. (C) During his trip the Canadian Prime Minister also visited Barbados and Haiti. Haiti is the Canadian government's second foreign policy priority, following Afghanistan. Canada contributes more aid to Haiti than any other global aid recipient. The Canadian government is currently providing a police presence, and its aid has had some success in controlling gang activity.

INTEREST IN FUTURE MEETINGS

12. (U) Edwards noted that Canadian Ambassador to the United States Michael Wilson wanted Edwards to visit Washington soon after he became Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in March 2007. In fact, Edwards was in Washington, D.C., in June 2007 and had planned to meet with the Deputy Secretary. However, as the Deputy Secretary noted, he was called away to travel with the President to Europe and then on to Iraq and Pakistan. Edwards indicated that he would like to reschedule their meeting soon and that he would welcome the opportunity to host the Deputy Secretary in Ottawa.

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MEETING PARTICIPANTS:

U.S.
Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte
Kaye Lee, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary
Ted Wittenstein, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary
Ellen Collieran, Vice Consul, U.S. Embassy Manila
Lori Michaelson, Embassy Notetaker

Canada
Leonard Edwards, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Randolph Mank, Director General of Asia and South Pacific
Embassy Notetaker

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